

Verbs

A **verb** is a word that shows action or links a subject to another word in a sentence.

Tornadoes cause tremendous damage. (action verb)

The weather is often calm before a storm. (linking verb)

Types of Verbs

768.1

Action Verbs

An action verb tells what the subject is doing. (See page 540.)

Natural disasters hit the globe nearly every day.

768.2

Linking Verbs

A linking verb connects—or links—a subject to a noun or an adjective in the predicate. The most common linking verbs are forms of the verb *be* (*is, are, was, were, being, been, am*). Verbs such as *smell, look, taste, feel, remain, turn, appear, become, sound, seem, grow, and stay* can also be linking verbs. (See page 540.)

The San Andreas Fault is an earthquake zone in California.

(The linking verb *is* connects the subject to the predicate noun *zone*.)

Earthquakes there are fairly common. (The linking verb *are* connects the subject to the predicate adjective *common*.)

768.3

Helping Verbs

A helping verb (also called an auxiliary verb) helps the main verb express tense and voice. The most common helping verbs are *shall, will, should, would, could, must, might, can, may, have, had, has, do, did*, and the forms of the verb *be*—*is, are, was, were, am, being, been*. (See page 541.)

It has been estimated that 500,000 earthquakes occur around the world every year. (These helping verbs indicate that the tense is present perfect and the voice is passive.)

Fortunately, only about 100 of those will cause damage. (*Will* helps express the future tense of the verb.)

Grammar Practice

Verbs 1

■ Action, Linking, and Helping Verbs



For the numbered sentences in the following paragraphs, write the underlined verb and identify each as an “action verb,” a “linking verb,” or a “helping verb.”

Example: A boat will not float unless there is enough water.
will (helping verb)

(1) You know that boats need a certain depth of water in order to float. (2) What happens when people must take a boat where the water level is too low? (3) Engineers can build a dam, which raises the water level on one side of the dam. This enables boats to travel there. (4) But how do the boats get from one side of the dam to the other?

A “lock” in the dam allows boats through. (5) A lock is a huge container with massive gates on each end, built right into the wall of the dam. (6) When a boat approaches the dam, the gates on one end of the lock open so that the boat can enter. Once it’s all the way in, the gates close. (7) The boat remains steady in the lock while the lock operators either add water (to raise the boat) or remove water (to lower the boat). (8) When the water level reaches the water level on the other side of the dam, the opposite gates open, and the boat continues on its way.

(9) Both small boats and large ships can be lifted or lowered in this way. (10) The process seems very slow, but boats and ships can go places that would have been impossible to reach without a system of locks.

Next Step: Write 2–3 sentences about being on a boat. Use all three types of verbs. Read your sentences aloud to a classmate.